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ABSTRACT

One in a series of Native American instructional materials, this booklet introduces elementary students to the history and culture of the Navajo, Pueblo, and other Indian tribes of the southwest desert. Written in simple language, the booklet provides background information, activities, legends, and illustrations. Topics include the climate of the region, farming and hunting activities, the economic importance of corn, religious practices, the southwest tribes' creation legend, the significance of kachinas, the function of the kiva, the use of sand paintings in Navajo healing ceremonies, the distinguishing features of the Navajo language, and the crafts at which desert Indians excelled (weaving, silversmithing, and pottery). Student activities include constructing a model pueblo (directions and patterns are provided); creating a painting to reflect the mood of the Navajo chant, "Beauty Way"; and mapping the locations of the 12 southwest tribes. Evaluation questions assess the students' ability to describe the culture of the desert culture area and compare it with the woodland, plains, and coastal Indian cultures covered by other booklets in this series. The text refers to films and books containing related information. (JH)

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DESERT CULTURE AREA

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Cathy Ross & Roger Fernandes

- GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS
- WOODLAND CULTURE AREA
- PLAINS CULTURE AREA
- COASTAL CULTURE AREA
- **DESERT CULTURE AREA**
- THE WAY IT IS TODAY

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The Desert Culture Area covers the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Nevada and Southern California. The climate in this area is dry, with very hot summers and moderate-to-cold winters.

The people of this area were known as farmers. Their main crop was corn. They lived in farming communities and hunted small animals.

Some of the tribes in this area are:

Hopi	HO-pee	Zuni	ZOO-nee
Pueblo*	PWEB-low	Pima	PEE-ma
Navajo	NAH-va-ho	Mohave	mo-HA-vee
Apache	a-PATCH-ee	Maricopa	mare-a-COPE-a
Anasazi	on-a-SAW-zee	Havasupai	ha-va-SUE-pie
Papago	POP-a-go		
Yuma	YOU-ma		

*There are 19 Pueblos and each is named, for example:

Acoma Pueblo	(ACK-come-a)
Taos Pueblo	(TAH-ose)
Santo Domingo Pueblo	(SAN-toe doe-MING-go)

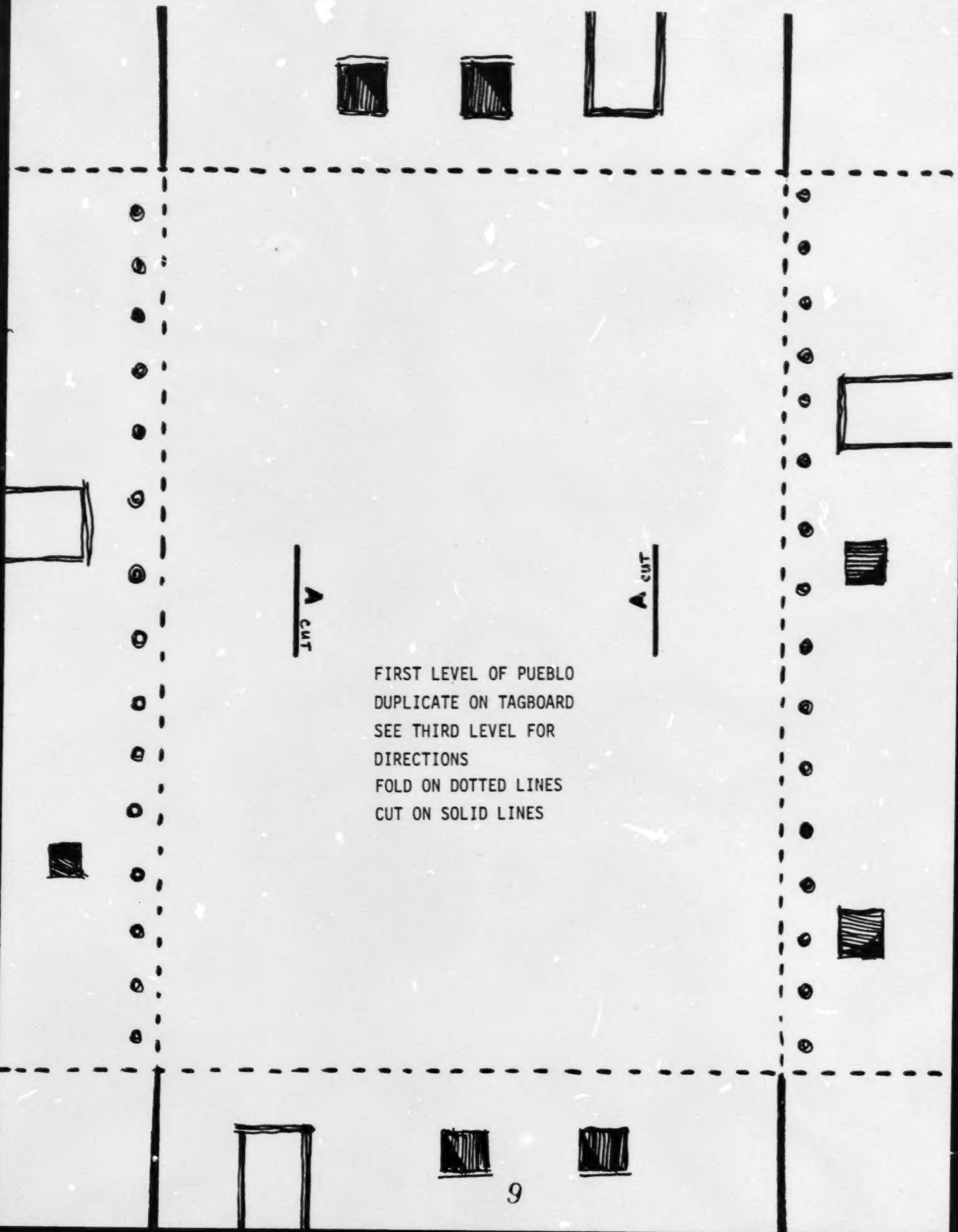
Locate these tribes on the map included in the General Information Kit.

View the filmstrip "The Hopi and the Navajo; the People of the Southwest"

Complete your culture chart on this area as the information is presented.

DESERT

Some Indian tribes of the Southwest desert lived in dwellings called **pueblos**, which were made out of adobe (dried clay and straw.) Some of the tribes who lived in these dwellings became known as the Pueblo Indians. Most pueblos were built in tiers, three and four stories high. These homes were like apartments with many different families living in separate rooms. You can make a model of a pueblo using the pattern and directions in this kit. Other tribes in this area, such as the Navajo people, lived in hogans (HOE-gones.) A hogan had eight sides made of logs and a rounded roof made of logs sealed with mud. Grass often grew on the mud roof. The doorway to the hogan always faced east towards the rising sun.

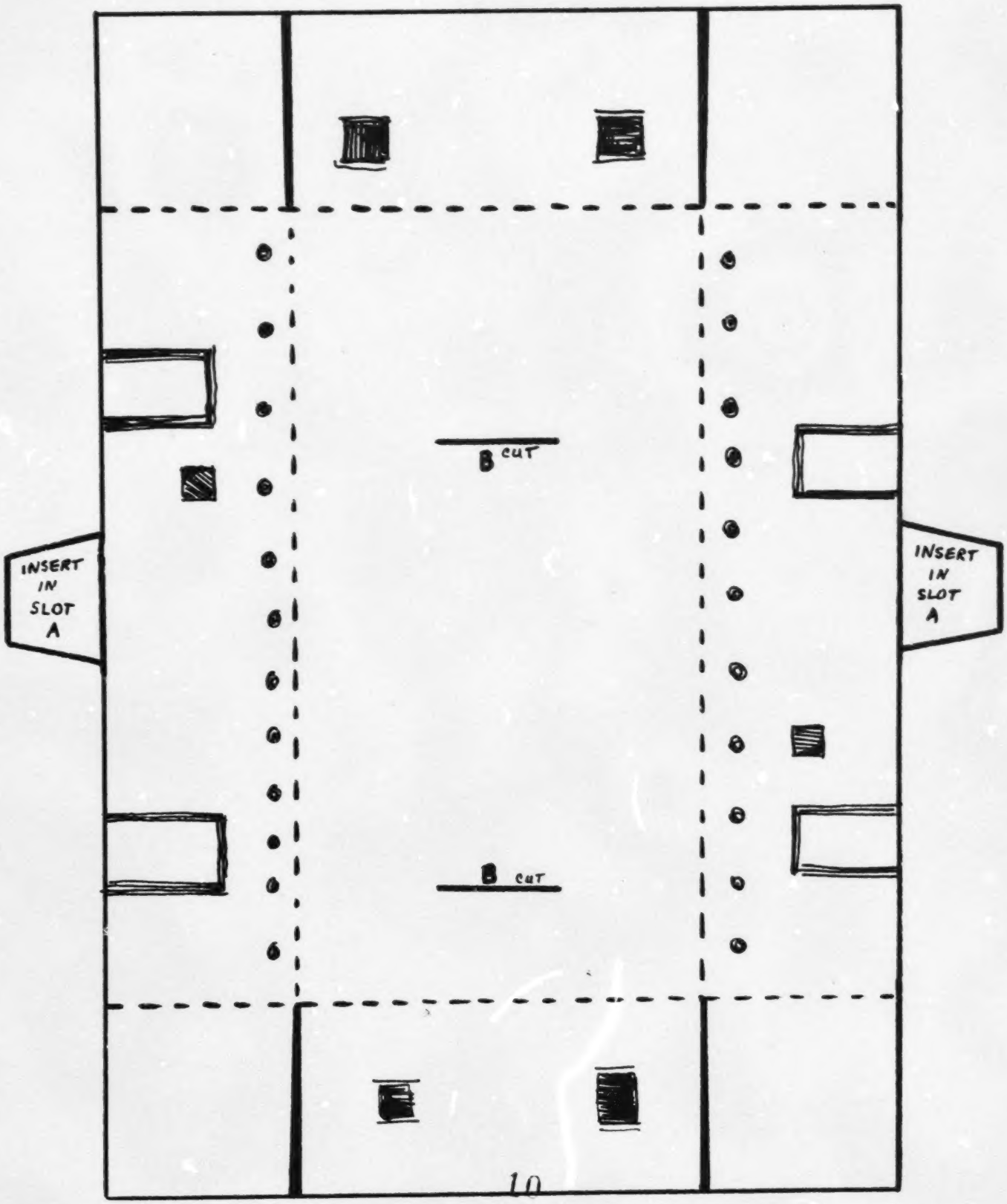


FIRST LEVEL OF PUEBLO
DUPLICATE ON TAGBOARD
SEE THIRD LEVEL FOR
DIRECTIONS
FOLD ON DOTTED LINES
CUT ON SOLID LINES

SECOND LEVEL OF PUEBLO

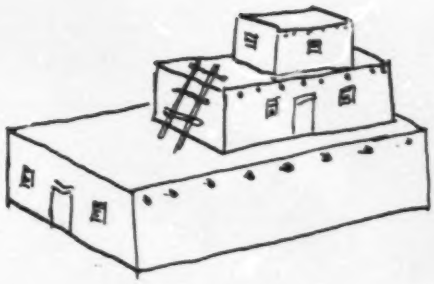
DUPLICATE ON TAGBOARD

SEE THIRD LEVEL FOR DIRECTIONS

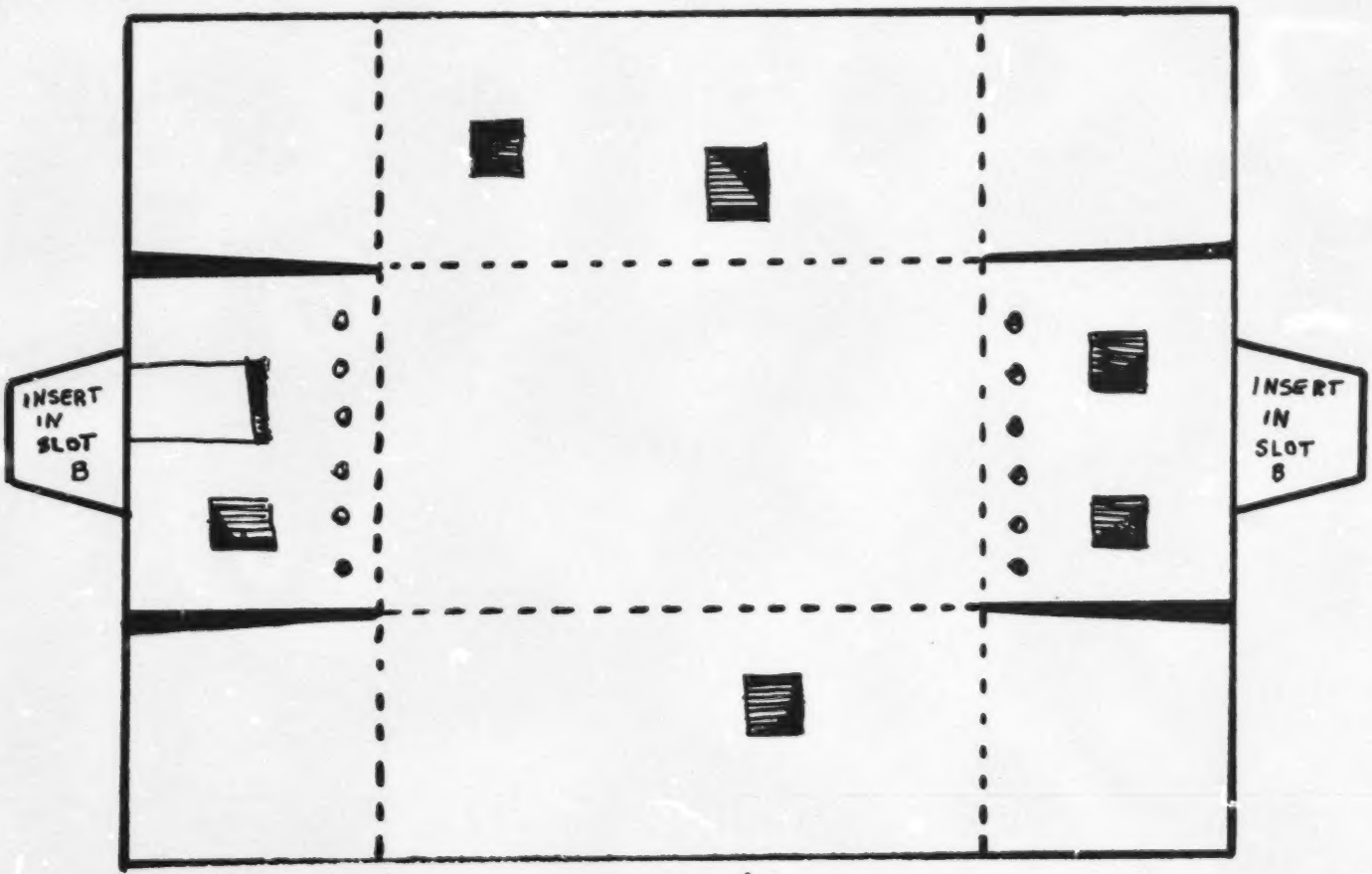


DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING PUEBLO

Duplicate these three pages on cream-colored tagboard or construction paper. Cut out each level and fold on the dotted lines. Cut in on the solid lines from each corner. Paste each level together at the corners to form a box. Then use the tabs and the slots to connect the levels on top of one another, with the largest one on the bottom and the smallest one on the top. You may want to make other sizes too, and construct a complete village. Use toothpicks glued together to make ladders leading from each level to the one above it.



THIRD LEVEL OF PUEBLO



Corn was originally developed by the southwest desert Indians. Through contact with other tribes, it gradually came to be cultivated across the central plains and up into the eastern woodlands. The legends say that corn was a gift from the kachinas to the people. Today, many kachinas carry an ear of corn in one hand. The corn used in the desert culture area comes in several different colors, including blue, red yellow, and white. The people of this culture area look upon corn as being like a human person, because it needs care in order to flourish. They call it the "corn mother." The yellow cornsilk on each ear represents her hair. Traditionally, when a Pueblo child is born, he or she would be given a perfect ear of corn. This stands for a long healthy life and always having enough to eat.

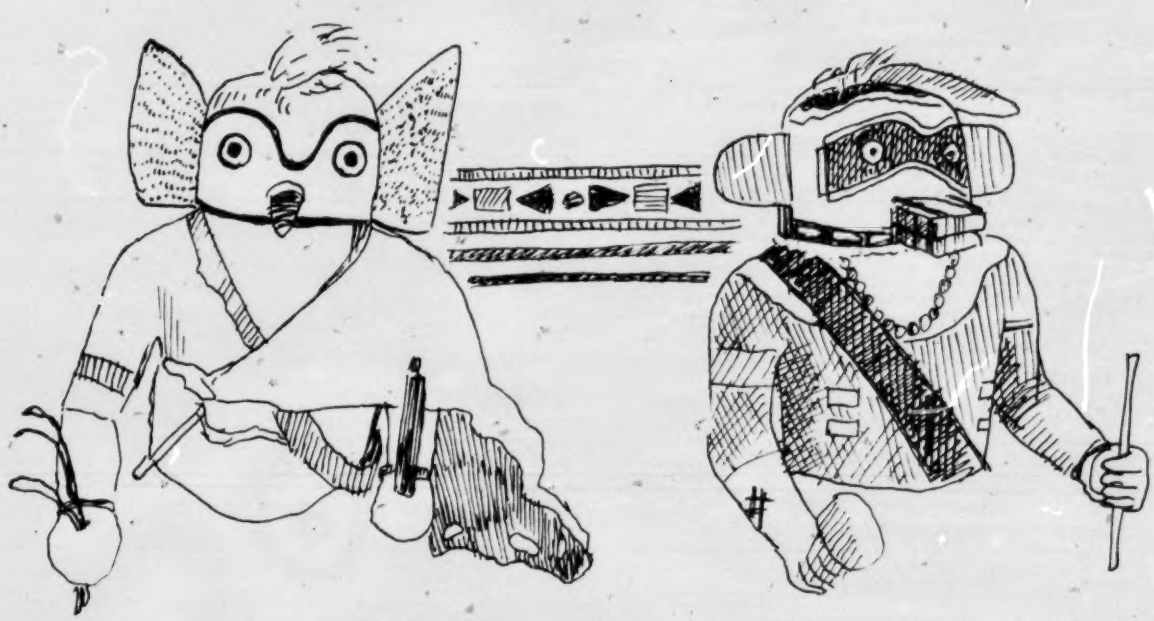
Corn was the main food of the desert people. It was used to make a variety of stews and soups and could be ground into corn meal. The Navajo people ground their corn between two flat rocks. How is this different from the way woodland people ground their corn? Corn meal was used to make tortillas, piki (PEEK ee) bread, and pasole (pah SO lay) which is a drink. Today, Pueblo children may crumble up piki bread to make a dry cereal very much like corn flakes.

Many of the Pueblo dwellers of the Southwest followed the Kachina beliefs. Kachinas (ka CHEE nas) are not gods, but are invisible beings who act as go-betweens for people and the Great Spirit. Specially trained men could wear Kachina costumes and masks for special ceremonies and celebrations. A man did not become a Kachina when he did this, but the spirit of the Kachina was with him at this time.

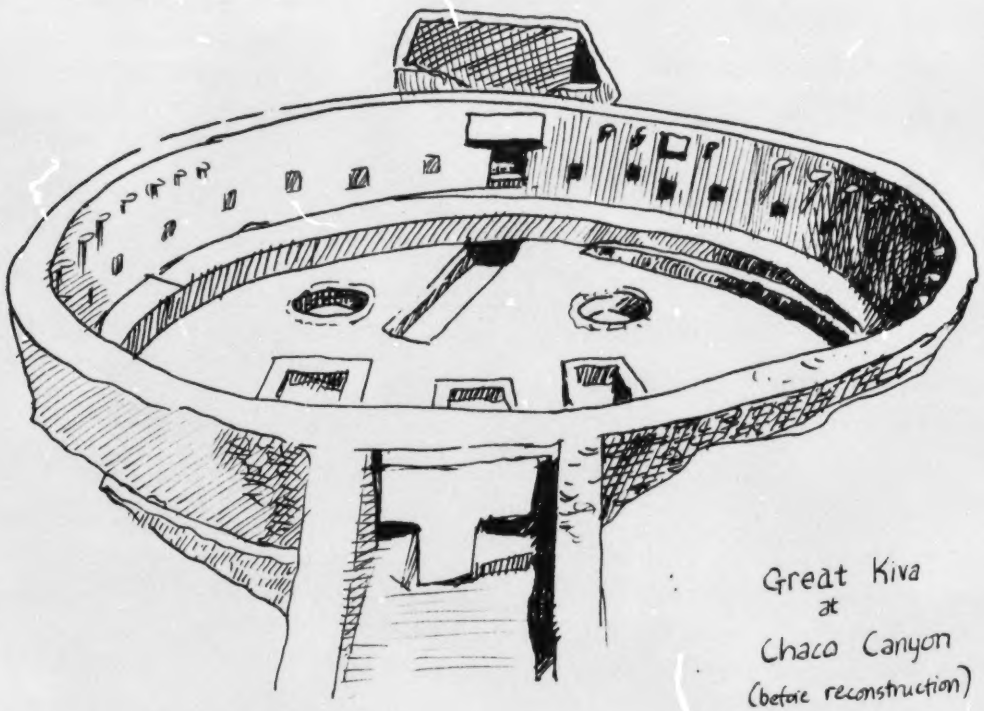
Kachinas are kind and loving. They often carry symbols of things for which the people prayed, such as rain and good harvest. There are over 250 different kachinas, representing animals, birds, plants and such things as the sun, rain, and snow.

Kachinas dolls are used as ceremonial gifts to children. These dolls help the children learn the spirit and the power of the Kachina and what the Kachinas looks like. Children take them home and are reminded of the love and strength of the Kachinas and can recognize the Kachina when he or she returns.

A picture of TAWA, the sun Kachina, is on the next page.



TAWA, THE SUN KACHINA



Great Kiva
at
Chaco Canyon
(before reconstruction)

The kiva (KEE-vah) is like a Southwest Indian Church. It is where many religious ceremonies take place and where young men are taught the songs and ceremonies of the Pueblo people. Depending on the individual Pueblo tribe, a kiva might be rectangular or circular in shape, and either located above or below the ground. During the Kachina dances, the dancers often emerge from the kiva entrance. Within the kiva is a sacred altar and a place that represents the "sipapuni", the doorway in the sky where the people originally entered this world. (See the legend, "The Origin of the Southwest Tribes.") Traditionally, a boy would leave his home at the age of 5 or 6 and go to the kiva with his father and grandfather. There he would learn the ceremonies and the dances of his tribe.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SOUTHWEST TRIBES

In the beginning there was only Endless Space. Nothing stirred because there were no winds. No shadows fell because there was no light. Only Tawa, the Sun Spirit, existed and he was unhappy because all was so barren. He gathered the elements of Endless Space and put some of his own substance into them, and in this way he created the First World. There were no people then, only insect creatures who lived in a dark cave. Tawa called his messenger, Spider Woman, and told her to go down and prepare the living creatures for a change. Spider Woman went down and she said: "Tawa the Sun Spirit, who made you, is unhappy because you do not understand the meaning of life. Therefore, you must prepare to leave this place and enter the Second World."

Spider Woman led them on their journey, taking them to another cave that lay far above the first one. The journey was long and between the time they began and the time they finished, Tawa changed them into other forms of living things. When at last they emerged into the Second World, they were quite different. They were animals with fur, webbed fingers and tails. But soon the animals began eating one another. Tawa saw that they still did not understand the meaning of life and so he sent Spider Woman to lead them on another journey.

While Spider Woman and the animals traveled, Tawa created the Third World. When the creatures followed Spider Woman into the Third World they discovered that their bodies had changed again. Their fur, their webbed fingers and their tails had disappeared. Spider Woman said to them: "Now, you are no longer merely creatures. You are people. Tawa has given you this place so that you may live in harmony with one another and forget all evil. Do not injure one another and try to understand the meaning of things." Then Spider Woman left them.

At first, life in the Third World was good. The people built kivas and planted corn. But gradually things began to change. Some of the people began to do evil things. The cornstalks in the fields withered. The rivers moved more slowly and the clouds did not release their rain. Tawa saw what was happening to the world he had made. He called Spider Woman and sent her to the people with a message. She entered a kiva where the people were gathered. She said: "Tawa the Sun Spirit is displeased with what he has created. You have forgotten what you should have remembered. Therefore, all people of good heart shall go away and leave the

evil ones behind. In the next world you must try to live in harmony and discover the meaning of life."

Then Spider Woman made a tall hollow plant grow up to the sky and go through an opening in the sky. This is the way the people departed from the lower world to the Fourth World, by climbing up the plant and through the Sipapuni, the doorway-in-the-sky.

As the climbers stepped up into the Fourth World, Yawpa the mockingbird stood at Spider Woman's side and sorted them out. "You shall be a Hopi and speak the Hopi language," he said to one. "You shall be a Navajo and speak the Navajo language," he said to another. He assigned every person to a tribe and a language, and to each tribe he gave a direction to go in its migration. The white people, too, were given a language and were told to go to the east.

When all had reached the Fourth World, Spider Woman spoke once again: "Now you will go on your journeys. Tawa, the Sun Spirit will watch over you. Let the blue corn be your guide. If you reach a certain place and the corn does not grow, you will know that you have gone too far. Return the way you came, build another village and start again. In time, you will find the land that is meant for you. But never forget that you came from the Lower World for a purpose. Remember to live in harmony with one another. When you build your kivas, place a small sipapuni in the floor to remind you of the doorway-in-the-sky. Only those who forget why they came to this world will loose their way."

* For a longer version of this legend, read "How the People Came from the Lower World" in the book People of the Short Blue Corn by Harold Courlander.

The desert people have traditionally held a deep reverence for the beauty of the earth and of all things. This philosophy is perhaps expressed best by the Navajo chant called Beauty Way.

The last lines are:

"May it be beautiful above me
May it be beautiful below me
May it be beautiful before me
May it be beautiful behind me
May it be beautiful all around
In beauty it is finished."

Think about this. Create a painting that gives this feeling and share it with your class. See the film "Annie and The Old One" (BFA Educational Media).

The Navajo language was first written down in the late 1800's, but it had been spoken for a long time before it was finally written down. The words are difficult for non-Indians to pronounce because the vowels are drawn-out and different tones of voice may be used (high and low tones) within one word. Here are some words in Navajo. Make a picture of each word on a piece of paper and below it write the word in Navajo.

di yo gi´	rug
latsini	bracelet
di be´	sheep
di ne´	Navajo people
shizhé´é	my father
shima´	my mother
hosh	cactus

Below is a page from a Navajo reader for children today. The book is Stephanie and the Coyote by Jack Crowder. Many Navajo children who still live on the reservation today are "bi-lingual," which means that they speak both Navajo and English. This type of book helps them in school. See if you can recognize any of the words:

My father is taking the wagon to haul wood and water today.
My mother is busy spinning so she can weave a rug.
She spins the wool with a spinning stick
That she rolls with the palm of her hand.

I can card some wool for mother, and I am learning how to weave.
My dog is waiting for me, he wants to go to work.
The sheep are crying "hurry" and my donkey wants to sleep.

Díí jį́ shizhé'é tsinaabąąs yee chizh dóó tó niidooyéél.
Shimá éí ajidiz dooleeł, diyogí jidootł'óół biniiyé.
Shimá bee adizí yee aghaa' yidiz bílátł'áádhdęę' yee náyoołhisgo.

Shimá aghaa' ła' bá hááníshcha', dóó dah iistł'ǫ́ ałdó' bíhoosh'aah.
Shilęę́chąą'í tł'óo'di shiba' sidá, k'adęę shį́į́ jidilníísh.
"Tsxį́į́go," daaníigo dibé daacha, ndi shitélii éí t'ah ashhosh ch'éél jinízin.

Navajo craftsmen, both men and women, are known throughout the artistic world for their beautiful arts and crafts. Navajo rugs, jewelry, sand paintings and pottery are considered to be among the finest examples of beauty and design. The jewelry of the Navajo is often made of silver and turquoise. Turquoise is a blue-green stone found mainly in desert regions. The person making the jewelry (called a silversmith) gently hammers the silver around the turquoise to fasten them together. As the silver is shaped into a bracelet, ring, necklace or buckle, special designs may also be hammered in. Below are some designs that are used in silver jewelry.

Rain clouds - bring good fortune

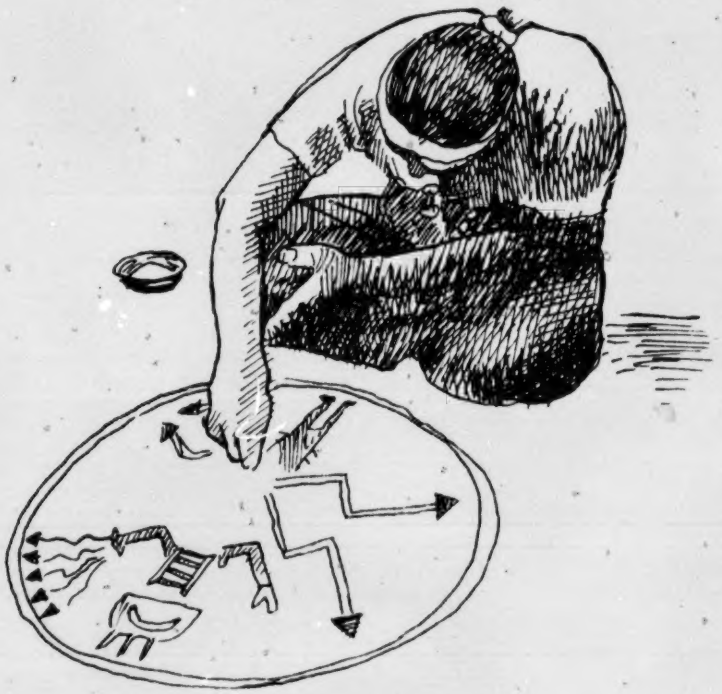
Squash Blossom - brings a good harvest

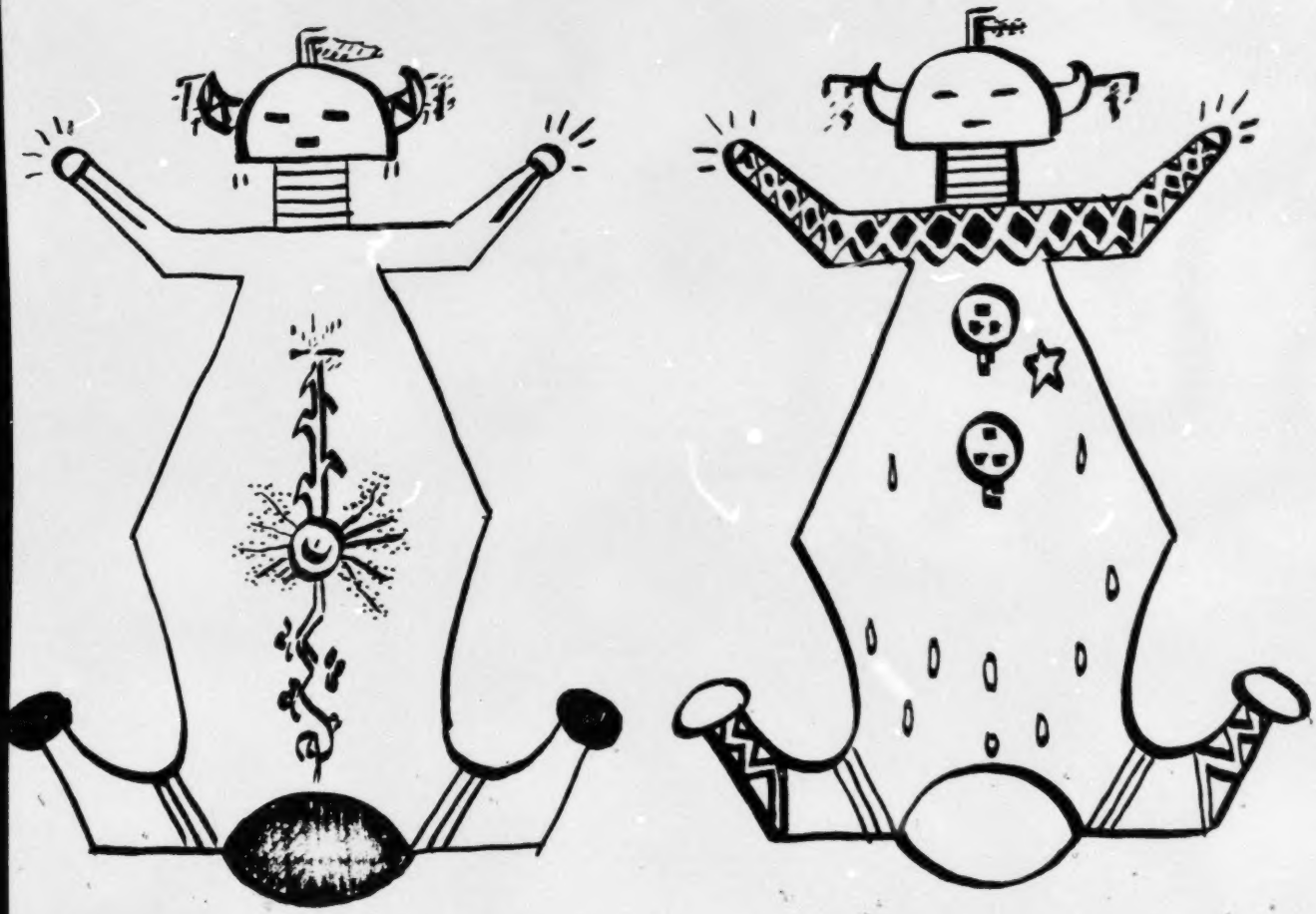
Thunderbird - brings happiness

The people of the desert culture area have been expert weavers for hundreds of years. According to legends, Spider Woman taught the people how to weave. Among the Hopi people, only the men are allowed to weave; in the Navajo culture, only the women may weave. Early weavers used cotton, which was grown in this area long before the Europeans came. After sheep were brought to this area, the weavers began to use wool. The wool is dyed different colors with vegetable dyes and then spun into yarn. The yarn is woven into cloth on a loom. The weaver creates the beautiful patterns and no two designs are ever exactly alike. Some still weave a tiny flaw into the corner of the cloth, just before it is completed. Some people say this is because the weaver does not wish to offend the spirits by making something perfect, and other people say this is done to free the spirit of the weaver so that it will not be trapped inside the design.

Read the book The Goat In The Rug by Charles Blood.

Sandpaintings are used by the Navajo people as part of their healing ceremonies. Colored rocks are crushed to make different colors of sand. Each design has a spiritual meaning. First a blanket of white sand is spread over the floor. Then the person making the sand painting takes colored sand and lets it run slowly from his fingers as he moves his hand across the floor. Great skill is required, for if the sandpainting contains mistakes it will not help the sick person get well. There are over 1,000 separate designs that are used in sandpaintings and the paintings themselves can be as large as ten feet in diameter. When the sandpainting is completed, the sick person is placed in the center of it and special dances and songs are performed. Sandpaintings are always destroyed at sunset. If a ceremony lasts more than one day, a new painting is made at sunrise of the next day. A medicine man is the only person who can make a sandpainting. A picture of two symbols used in sandpainting, Father Sky and Mother Earth, are on the next page. See the film, "Navajos: Children of the Gods" (Walt Disney films).





Mother Earth and Father Sky

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Briefly describe this culture area in your own words. Include food, clothing, shelter, and art.

2. Name three tribes from this culture area.

3. In what part of the United States is this culture area located?

4. Tell one way in which this culture area is <u>different</u> from another one you have studied.

5. What are Kachinas?

6. Write a word in the Navajo language.

7. Explain how a sandpainting is made and when it is used.

8. Draw a design that is used in making silver jewelry and tell what it means.

9. What is a kiva?

10. Explain the difference between a hogan and a pueblo.